An imprint on a fountain

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An imprint on a fountain

by Nalyra

Summary

Written for the birthday challenge for @idontfindyouthatinteresting on Tumblr, this is a missing scene for "Secondo":
New Content between Act 3 and 4 (after Will speaks with Chiyo, and before Will frees the prisoner)

#Happy4thBirthdayHannibal

_____

It always struck me as illogical that Will would not go up to -that- castle and take a look. Well, now he does.

Hope you like.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

She leaves after they have drunk the tea, after the fire has died down to smoldering embers. She does not tell him where she goes, secure in the knowledge that he does not know his way around, leaving him to discover his surroundings on his own, with little chance to discover her.

The little house is quiet, the bunk she has prepared for him narrow and hard, perfunctory though made with care, all creases smoothed. Will steps up to it, weary in soul and body, hesitating, his hand hovering in mid-air, on it's way to pull the blanket back. An owl croons in front of the window and Will exhales quietly, knowing he has to follow the urge, now that he is indeed here.

He dresses quietly, though uncaring of her hearing his movements, sure somehow she will not interfere, an unspoken agreement of respective withdrawal having settled somehow. He steps out of the door, the air beyond frigid, noting the key on the ledge, another unspoken, unobtrusive offer and one he accepts, the key heavy in his pocket. There is a little path somewhere off to the left, winding up in the general direction of the castle and Will follows it, the night and his feelings tranquil. He keeps his flashlight in hand but off, the moons light enough to discern the narrow path, without endangering his footing.

It takes longer than expected to reach the top, the valley dark below him, the little house at the base of the little hill almost dark, a thin orange sheen glowing in the windows, beckoning warmly. Will turns away from it with a resolutions that's firmly rooted in yearning and carefully makes his way through the rubble, the stone yard fallen victim to time and heavy artillery if the holes everywhere are any indication. He pushes the broken front door open with a push with his shoulder, the darkness beyond absolute.

Will inhales the stale air, rolling his neck for a moment before he lets his own darkness flow for a moment, shadowy antlers dispelled by the beam of the flashlight, sounds of movements of little feet scurrying away in a rush drifting over, an echoing quiet settling.

He takes a step, and it's like a shift of reality, his vision threaded for a moment with red pulsing antlers, realigning, imagination in overdrive. A child laughs, hurrying footsteps, echoing in front of him. He follows the sound, the long corridor opening into a crumbling hall, the staircase beyond covered in moth infested carpets, moldy, and falling apart. Will hesitates and then carefully ascends, the steps uneven, debris everywhere. He exhales a breath of relief when he reaches the second level, listening closely to himself, the echo of children playing sounding hollowly from beyond the left hallway and he swallows, following it.

The rooms are as if plucked from a dusty museum of war savagery, innocence and comfort spoiled by the evidence of brutality, cuts of knives and the plundering of assets everywhere Will looks. He swallows and traces the heavy air quietly, his imagination in abject coloration giving voice to the unmentionable, his soul shying away from the implications.

He finally falls to his knees in the middle of -her- room, the only room relatively cleaned up and Will realizes in terror that Hannibal must have cleaned it, after. He presses his hands to his ears, trying to block out the screams only he can hear, trying to breathe. He looks up, his

vision wavering and his gaze falls upon the small bed, a sole doll sitting there, amidst the pieces of porcelain faces, her expression crafted in surprised kindness, chilling in its simplicity and frightening in the half shadows. The moth ridden hair is half gone, paint flaking and the torch drops from his shaking hands, rolling a feet away. Will falls forward and crawls over to the bed, his fingers trembling when he reaches for her, so light, so light, so — fucking— light in his hands, no weight at all.

He traces the little face for a moment, wondering if it actually looks similar to her or if it is only imprinted, with only abject terror fusing her ghost to it. Some of the paint of her mouth comes off and he sobs, the tear falling into the dark. He puts her into his coat, warming her from his skin, the porcelain feeling like teeth.

He pushes himself up and bends down to retrieve the flashlight, his gaze falling on the connecting door, furniture strewn around the room beyond.
He is about to take a step towards it when he sees the claw marks on the wooden door, dried red just visible in the low light. Another tear falls and vanishes in the dark of the room, his silent gasp jarringly loud.

Will turns and walks out, retracing his steps, getting faster and faster with each step, almost running by the time he reaches the courtyard. He slows down on the path down the hill, his neck prickling with the feeling of being watched, of being hunted, of… being prey.

He skids to a halt when he ends up at the fountain suddenly, unsure of why and how he has gotten here of all places, looking around wildly for the fireflies, none swarming at this hour. He rubs his face with both hands, the flashlights metal a cooling sensation on his skin.

He takes her doll out and kneels down, trying to feel beyond the dread and terror, tries to feel for a resolution. His thumb traces along the dolls right jaw gently, voice low, wondering.

„Is this what shaped him, is this what… made him?“

Echoing silence, broken only by the sounds of the forest around, the night too deep to care for his plea. He sits the doll down next to -her- imprint, painstakingly arranging the clothes and limbs until it sits, the right hand touching Mischa’s palm print, an echo of her laugh as she put it there, her brother behind her, intense and resolute and… loving. Will lets the pendulum swing and morph into antlers, pulsing once, seeing the scene play out in ghostly white, like inverted faded photographs, sounds fogged up somehow, distorted by reality’s pull. He raises his eyes and locks eyes with -him-, his aura dominating even the vision.

Will swallows and lets the vision fade, gasping in the cold air, his voice trembling, broken and yet resolute, clear.

„No. This did not … make him.“

He gasps a laugh, tears streaming down his face in earnest now, words sobbed.

„But I guess it didn’t help, either…“

He pushes himself up, swaying in the dark for a moment, leaving the flashlight to illuminate her ghosts playground, the dark swallowing him up for a moment, the slight orange glow like a siren, irrefutable now.

She waits for him when he returns to the little house, offering him a tea, silently, her eyes full of understanding. She leaves him for a moment and then returns with a warm, wet cloth, starting to dab at his face gently and yet matter-of-factly, somehow draining his last energy with every soft touch. Her voice is chillingly gentle, repeating the words, telling a history of personal experience in the spaces between.

„There are places on these grounds he cannot safely go.“

Will swallows, his voice raw, almost inaudible.

„No. Neither can I. Not anymore.“

He nods at her, gives her the cup back and then turns towards his bunk, knowing he will not sleep in this place, haunted by ghosts and memory, gnawing at the reins of his subconscious.

He refuses to turn to check for -her- eyes, watching him, a prickling of his neck, scratching at his nerves, a dolls dead eyes heavy on his soul.

End Notes

Kudos and comments/feedback feed my muse^^
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